

REMARKS

This application has been carefully reviewed in light of the Office Action dated June 6, 2006. Claims 24 to 35, 39 and 40 are pending in the application, with Claims 22 and 23 having been cancelled. Claims 24, 26, 32, 39 and 40 have been amended, and Claims 24, 26, 39 and 40 are in independent form. Reconsideration and further examination are respectfully requested.

Applicants thank the Examiner for the indication that Claims 26 to 31, 34 and 35 have been allowed. The amendments to independent Claim 26 are not seen to affect the allowability of this claim, and therefore Claim 26 is still seen to be in condition for allowance. Claim 40 as amended is a method claim which is seen to generally correspond with Claim 26. Accordingly, Claim 40 is also seen to be in condition for allowance.

Applicants also thank the Examiner for the indication that Claims 24 and 25 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form, including all of the limitations of the base claims. In keeping with the indication of allowable subject matter in Claim 24, Applicants have rewritten Claim 24 into independent form and to include the substance of base Claims 22 and 23, which have been cancelled. Consequently, independent Claim 24 as amended, together with its dependent claims, is seen to be in condition for allowance. Claim 39 as amended is a method claim which is seen to generally correspond with Claim 24. Accordingly, Claim 39 is also seen to be in condition for allowance.

Claims 24 and 40 were objected to based on alleged informalities. The amendments to Claims 24 and 40 are seen to address this objection. Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal are respectfully requested.

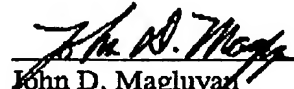
Claims 22, 23, 39 and 40 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) over U.S. Patent No. 5,616,968 (Fujii); and Claims 32 and 33 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over Fujii in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,886,890 (Ishida). The foregoing actions have been taken without prejudice or disclaimer of subject matter, and without conceding the correctness of the rejections, but rather strictly to obtain an earlier allowance.

Regarding a formal matter, it is respectfully requested to receive an initialed copy of the Form PTO-1449 that was submitted with the Information Disclosure Statement dated June 29, 2006.

No other matters being raised, it is believed that the entire application is fully in condition for allowance, and such action is courteously solicited.

Applicants' undersigned attorney may be reached in our Costa Mesa, California office at (714) 540-8700. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our below-listed address.

Respectfully submitted,


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